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In 1915 over 68,000 tons of dye woods valued at over \$1,000,000, were imported into this country. In the year 1916 it is estimated that there will be a large increase in both quantity and value. Logwood is the most widely used dye wood that is brought into the country. During the year 1915, of the total amount it made up over 55,000 tons valued at \$742,000. The pieces of wood as imported vary in diameter from 4 inches up to 3 feet or more and about 20 to 25 pieces on the average make a ton. A good share of this wood comes from Mexico. It is estimated that there are over 1,000 tons of logwood on the piers in New York harbor at the present time. In fact there has been such a demand for foreign dye woods that it has tended to stimulate production resulting in considerable speculation.

Owing to the tremendous demand for shipping facilities to carry war munitions, food and other supplies to the warring nations in Europe, the prices for transporting dye wood have been the principal cause for the great increase in the prices for these dye wood materials. For example, logwood before the war was normally sold for about \$19 per long ton. The present price is around \$50 per long ton. Before the war fustic brought a price of \$19 per long ton and now brings \$40. Lima or Brazil formerly brought \$25 and now is worth \$40. The price of osage orange has remained about the same, namely \$15 per long ton delivered. In fact all of these prices are given as delivered on the docks in New York harbor. The transportation charges are commonly quoted at from \$22 to \$28 a ton from West Indian and Mexican ports to the Atlantic seaboard.

Beside logwood, the principal woods are fustic, Lima wood or Brazil wood and a few other woods of lesser importance. Osage orange, which is found chiefly in eastern Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas and Missouri, as well as throughout the lower Mississippi valley, is coming into considerable prominence in the dye wood trade.

Dye woods have been brought to this country for the past 200 years. One New York company has been importing them for 115 years. Logwood which probably makes up 80 per cent. of all the wood used for dye purposes, is used for blue and black colors. Fustic and osage orange are used for the yellows and the Brazil wood is used for red. For other colors blends between these are used. The dye wood extract manufacturers require that the wood be completely stripped of all bark and sap wood. In fact the heart wood of the trees is the only portion that contains sufficient dyeing material to justify the expensive transportation charges involved. The trade generally considers that the outlook for osage orange is not particularly bright, for the reason that there is a sufficiently large supply of other and better dyeing material available.

#### *FIGHTING AUSTRALIAN APHIDS WITH MAINE FLIES*

AN interesting situation in international entomology has recently developed with reference to the modern practise of introducing, from one country to another, an insect control of an insect pest. The spectacular success of the Australian lady-beetle against the fluted scale of citrus fruits in California; the slower, more complex but effective work of imported parasitic and predaceous enemies against the brown-tail and gypsy moths in New England; and other experiments of this nature varying in importance; are already matters of economic history.

Up to this time few, if any, attempts have been made, in this connection, to distribute the *Syrphidae*, a family of flies (Diptera) many of which are, in their larval stages, predaceous upon aphids. It has been well known, of course, that this habit is of real economic importance, but it has apparently been customary to relegate these flies to a position of second importance in this field of useful endeavor and to confer first honors to the lady-beetles and parasitic Hymenoptera.



*Nikola Tesla*

Observations of some ten or twelve years in Maine, however, indicated strongly that the syrphid larvæ are, in that locality, the most efficient natural enemies of the aphids. In accordance, therefore, with the entomological policy of the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station to solicit the cooperation of specialists for problems of prime importance, Professor C. L. Metcalf was invited to study the Syrphidae of that state with particular reference to their larval habits.

Significant data were thus secured concerning which species of syrphids feed upon a given species of aphid. The publication, in bulletin form, of this and related information included the statement that a certain syrphid, *Pipiza pisticoides*, plays in the vicinity of Orono a rôle of first importance as a natural enemy of the woolly aphid of the apple. The larvæ feed so abundantly that the above ground colonies of this pest are well nigh exterminated by late summer.

Following upon this announcement a request came from Perth, Western Australia, for an importation of these flies in consideration of the fact that the woolly aphid is the most serious apple pest in that state. Accordingly, plans are underway for the shipment of *Pipiza pisticoides* and possibly other syrphids which accept the same diet.

It is never safe to predict results in an experiment of this sort, but the indications are in favor of a successful outcome. In which case the nice exchange of international courtesies—apples in Australia for oranges in America through benefit by insects—is of scientific as well as agricultural interest.

#### SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

WE record with regret the death of Professor Emil von Behring, of the University of Marburg, discoverer of diphtheria antitoxin; of Professor J. G. Darboux, permanent secretary of the

Paris Academy of Sciences and professor of mathematics at the Sorbonne; of George Massee, for many years head of the cryptogamic department of the Herbarium of the Kew Gardens, distinguished for his work in mycology; of M. Jules Courmont, professor of hygiene at Lyons; of G. Paladino, professor of histology and general physiology at the University of Naples, senator of the realm, and of General J. A. L. Bassot, the distinguished French geodesist.

DR. ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, inventor of the telephone, was awarded the Civic Forum Gold Medal for distinguished public service in New York on March 21. The presentation address was made by Dr. John H. Finley, state commissioner of education. Dr. Bell is the third recipient of the medal. It was awarded to Major General George W. Goethals in 1914, and to Thomas A. Edison in 1915.

SIR J. J. THOMSON, Cavendish professor of physics at the University of Cambridge and president of the Royal Society, Sir David Prain, director of Kew Botanical Gardens, and Sir George Beilby, head of the Royal Technical College of Glasgow, have been elected trustees of the Carnegie Trust for Scottish Universities.

MRS. STEPHEN V. HARKNESS has given to Yale University funds to erect dormitories for the use of students of the college in the form of one or more quadrangles. It is said that the value of Mrs. Harkness's gift may exceed five million dollars.

IT is reported that the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research has appropriated \$200,000 for the establishment of a hospital to be used for the instruction of surgeons in the Carrel-Dakin treatment of the wounded. It is expected that Dr. Alexis Carrel will be granted a leave of absence from France to return to New York and assume supervision of the work.